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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

statuette of a draped female figure; on a pedestal of onyx, before the fire-place, are a pair of fine Chinese vases. The mantelpiece is decorated with a beautifully embroidered lambrequin, and the overmantel is composed of a magnificent mirror, the frame being in cream and gold. There are several divans upholstered in old gold silk brocade, with cushions in gold and pink silk. On pedestals and tables, as well as on the mantelpiece, are several pieces of fine Dresden china. There is an Empire cabinet stand bearing a bronze bust, and on the mantelpiece there is a bronze clock of beautiful construction. A piano lamp, not shown in the picture, has for base an immense Chinese jar, with a dragon in gold surrounding same. There is a beautiful Chinese cabinet carved in ebony and a Chinese stand also in carved ebony, bearing a handsome Porcelain vase.

A large painted tapestry representing Tannhauser and Venus gives a magnificent feeling to the apartment. The tapestry was painted by Mrs. Bloodgood, and is a beautiful piece of work. Tannhauser is clothed in a tunie covered with golden heraldic

DECORATION.

BY JOHN BRETT.



OW that the furnisher has so much to do with the interior decoration of a house, as well as supplying its furniture, the following hints may be suggestively used to many of our readers, though perhaps, one may not agree with all the statements to be found therein.

Whilst it is the function of the artist to exalt natural images and to fix on canvas those that are fleeting and evanescent, it is the business of the decorator to take only such elements of them as



GATE OF MAUSOLEUM IN CITY CEMETERY OF HALLE-ON-SALLE.

Luck & Molyneux

embroidery. The legs and arms of the male figure are wine red, and his cloak purple. The modeling of the figure of Venus is superb, the flesh tints being extremely brilliant. The robe that falls from her figure is of soft purple silk, lined with a creamy green texture, and the entire panel is very captivating.

The floor of the apartment is of oak parquetry, covered with a Persian rug. The style of the furniture is of the harlequin order, as already described, and it is an example of *meubel de luxe* rather than *meubel de style*. The window seats are upholstered in pale gold brocade, with cushions in pale gold and pink. The draperies of the doorway are in old gold brocade. The combined efforts of the upholsterer and decorator have produced a very charming apartment.

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can be harmoniously interwoven with the rigid forms of the structures to which they are applied without crippling their usefulness.

Now, the usefulness of the walls of a house, besides and beyond the rudimentary one of keeping the wind away, is to minister to the intelligence and taste of the dwellers therein. Inasmuch as the walls are perpendicular, they confront the spectator whichever way he turns, and are most favorably placed for being looked at; so that, if you possess any specially beautiful image, common sense dictates that it should not be painted on the ceiling, because your eyes are not conveniently situated for seeing it there. The walls, therefore, are the necessary source of your intellectual entertainment, the home of your pictures and your books; and it is well known to cultivated people that no room can be attractive without pictures or books. It is true that it can be made comfortable by means of cabinet work, or wood panelling, or upholstery, as in the cabin of a yacht; but this treatment violates one fundamental condition of good decoration, for it interferes with the usefulness of the walls, inasmuch as

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much as the intellectual entertainment to be got out of panels is not considerable. They have the advantage over plaster or whitewash, being of a pleasanter color, and not so chilly to the touch.

Panels, of course, might be filled in with poetical or historical pictures or with views of the Himalayas; but there is a practical objection to this, viz., that portability is a valuable attribute of pictures, and that their shapes are necessarily dictated by the subjects you choose, whereas panels are permanent parts of the house, and their size and shape are not variable. The conclusion I arrive at, therefore, is that walls should only be panelled below the line of sight, where pictures would be in danger and impede the free occupation of the room.

I do not refer to tapestry as a mode of decorating walls, because, being portable, it may be considered as a form of pictorial art. The object of all these forms of decoration is to relieve the inmates from the distressing monotony of the blank wall enclosing them, the said blank wall being suggestive of a curtailment of one's liberty, and very consonant with the sentiment of a prison. The great desideratum is to vary the coloring of the wall, and for this purpose the area must be divided up so as to provide for different intervals of color in varied quantities.

This leads me to the practical inference that internal walls are best treated by what is known to architects as Diaper, which they sometimes prevent from its true use. Diaper is quite harmless if it be not obtrusively painted on internal walls.

The true function of the floor is to be walked on. The function of the ceiling is to reflect light. The function of the wall is to serve as a background or setting for your guests and your pictures. In order to see these to advantage the background should be subdued in color, so as not to intrude itself on your notice; also it is important that the upper part of it, or frieze, should be kept as light in color as possible, so as to reflect light to the opposite wall. Nothing is more fatal to the usefulness or pleasantness of a room than a dark ceiling. Reflected light is necessary to enable us to see into the shades of

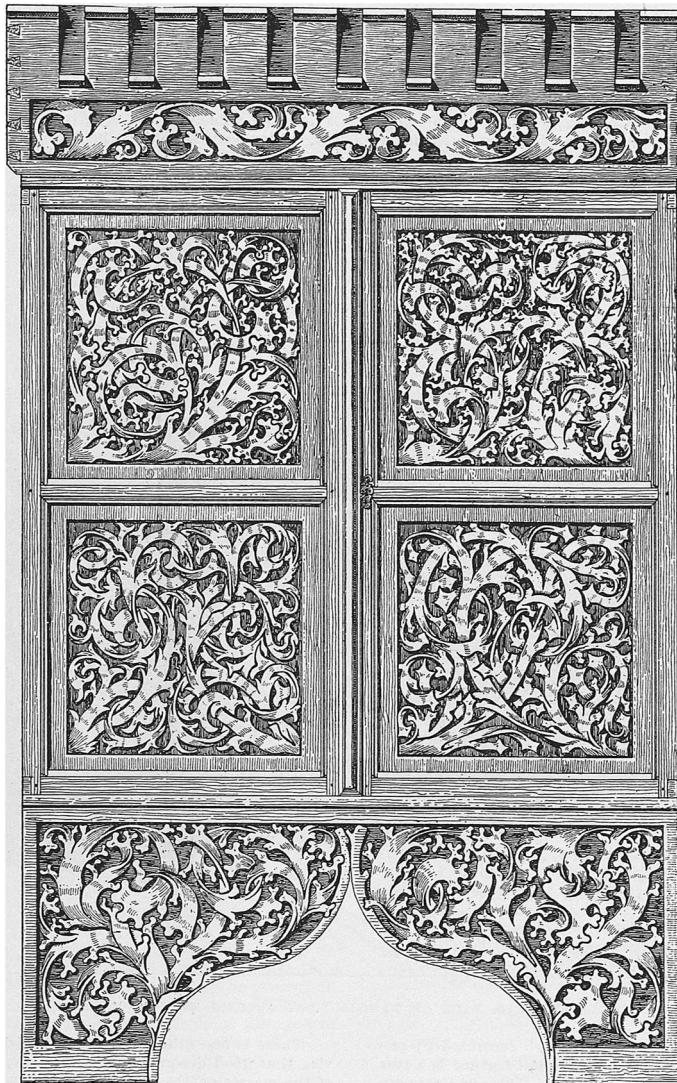
objects, and if the light which enters by the window is not reflected by a bright ceiling and frieze, the shades on the faces of the people as on all other objects will appear black. In my opinion white is the proper color for a ceiling.

In modern times, when poverty and ignorance have walked hand in hand, an effort has been made by our manufacturers to provide the world with cheap art wherewith to cover its walls;

but a moment's consideration will convince anyone that art and cheapness are incompatible, since the faculty to produce art is comparatively rare, and rare things are choice not cheap.

It is true that in early times a great deal of art of the utmost value was done for nothing, or at least not paid for in coin of the realm; the notes then current, viz., promises to pay in a future state, were deemed more than equivalent. These works were done in endowed monasteries by artists who neither had nor wanted any property of their own. The finest hand decoration in the world was done by them on the manuscripts. It is probable that equally good work could be done now, but it would have to be paid for as it was then, and, therefore, is wholly outside of the region of practical commerce. We have no parallel institutions now, and our artists are glad to conspire with the manufacturers in the effort to provide cheap art for the masses; and it is now for me to show that, although they have had, in one sense, a tremendous success, inasmuch as they may be said to have covered every room—rich and poor alike—with their wall decorations, their work in its present condition is rather a curse than a blessing; that its tendency is rather towards the degradation than the exaltation of taste, and leads to intellectual torpor.

Let me point out first, that unity is one of the fundamental principles of all art. It has always been recognized as such. By artistic unity I mean that each of the parts of a design shall be necessary to the other parts, and that none shall be redundant. Two hands, for instance, are necessary for the completion of the figure of a man, but two right hands would be redundant. In a society composed of men and women of different capacities and different



CARVED GOTHIC CABINET (GERMAN WORKMANSHIP) IN AUSTRIAN MUSEUM OF ART AND INDUSTRY IN VIENNA.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

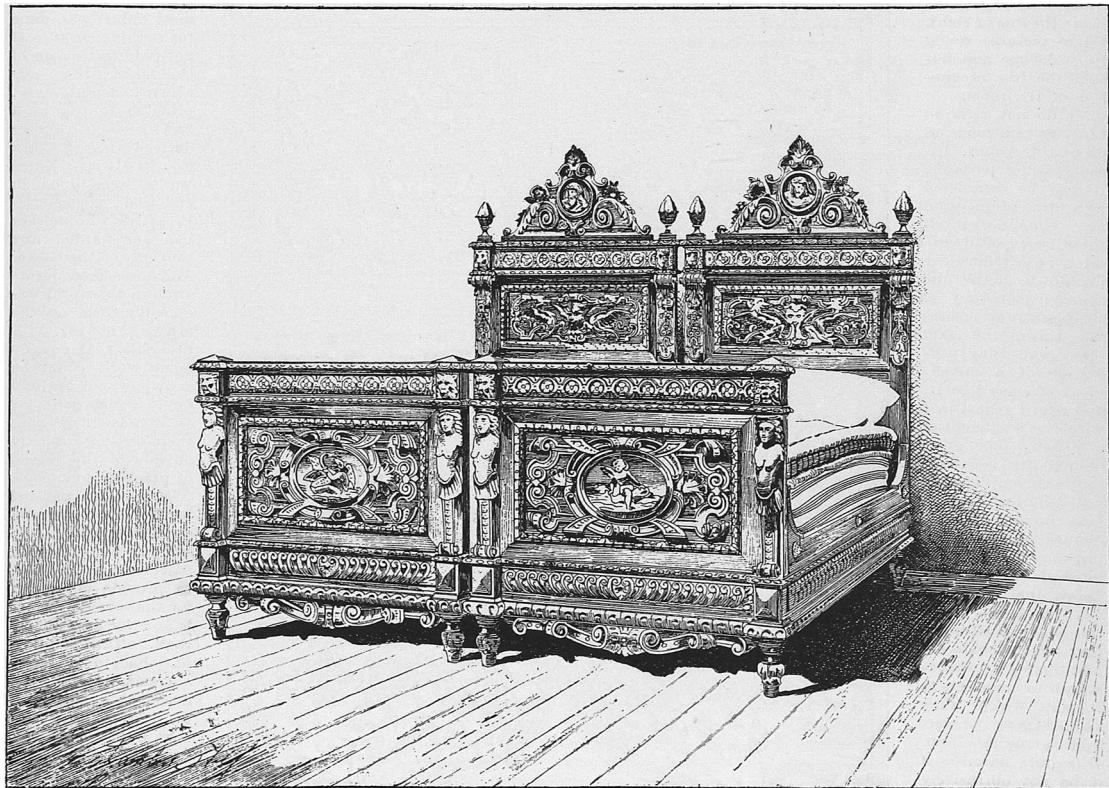
ages, each has a special function in supplanting the deficiencies of the others; but if all were made exactly alike, or turned out in similar groups human life in any high sense would be impossible—at all events its graces and beauties would disappear.

You see, therefore, that artistic unity, a fundamental principle of good design, cannot be had in stamped or printed ornament, for its members must inevitably be repeated many times in one field of view. Now human sensibilities are capable of being quickened and developed, or, on the other hand, of being dulled and debased by what you offer for their contemplation. A series of ideas, or of forms, or of intervals of color such as constitute an artistic design, may be entirely delightful, but its frequent repetition without any relief will first weary, next disgust, and finally dull your sensibility and destroy your capacity for enjoyment of that kind. The effect in the first case is exalting, in the last depressing. Whatever quickens is good; whatever deadens is bad.

in point, because the shaft is a constructional, not a decorative member, and its multiplication confirms the sense of security of the structure.

In those cases where a work of fine art is adapted to perfect reproduction by casting, let us say sculpture or engraved plates, which can be printed indefinitely, its intrinsic value and its artistic importance are in no degree diminished by repetition, as each copy is isolated. Five hundred prints of the "Raising of Lazarus" are not usually hung in one room. If every town in England possessed a cast of the Theseus of Phidias the intrinsic value of that incomparable work would remain the same as it is now.

I do not despise decorative art produced in factories because it is cheap, but I broadly affirm, as a general principle, that it is not only valueless, but, strictly speaking, vicious; that is to say, its tendency is to dull the peoples' sensibilities rather than to exalt them, and that is the correct definition of vice.



DOUBLE BEDSTEAD, MADE OF MAHOGANY, BY ANTONIO ZANETTI, VENICE.

The walls of my own picture gallery were decorated by one of the most esteemed London firms. The chief feature is a rose set in the undulations of a foliated pattern. The same rose appears about five hundred times. Even if it were well drawn, and if your sensibilities remained awake enough to recognize the resemblance to nature, the effect would be to make you hate the smell of roses for the rest of your life. To familiarize the eye with the gross violations of vegetable physiology which are inevitable in a foliated pattern is, as I said before, to promote intellectual torpor; instead of being roused to indignation, you sink into indifference. The result is that I take a vindictive pleasure in driving nails into the roses to hang pictures by and am glad to obliterate the decoration.

The reiteration of the shaft in the colonnade is not a case

There is one other thing that I wish to state emphatically, viz., that good decorative art is not any nearer within the reach of the masses or the poor, or moderately poor working people than is good fine art, for the cheap processes of the factory cannot produce it. In the nature of things there is no prospect of their ever doing so; for the tendency of that scientific culture, which is the peculiar distinction and most notable characteristic of the present era, is a current setting in the opposite direction, viz., in the direction of pure realism.

The further we advance in the knowledge of Nature's laws, the more keenly alive do we become to the importance of her forms, and the more we are offended by any distortion of them. The shadow on the dial cannot go backwards, and archaic design cannot now be revived.